

LBJ Seeks Domingo Scapegoats; Lots of Candidates

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Washington, May 21—Presidential advisers are now looking for scapegoats to blame for the Dominican Republic mess. The fact that such a hunt is on is sufficient proof that the Administration realizes the whole military intervention operation has been fouled up in its follow-through phases.

The effort to pin the blame elsewhere than on President Johnson has started with a rush in the last 24 hours. The first proposal candidates for the White House doghouse have been U.S. Ambassador W. Tapley Bennett Jr.; the new CIA chief, Adm. William F. Raborn Jr., and Undersecretary of State Thomas C. Mann.

It does not matter whether any of these three are actually culpable. There has to be a scapegoat list, even if, as at present, it is passed along surreptitiously by officials whose tips usually reflect the White House line.

It Could Be a Long List

Because the errors in judgment, or misinterpretation of the Administration's program for bringing order out of chaos, involve diplomatic, military and intelligence agencies, the list of scapegoats could be pretty long.

Certainly it could be more extensive in connection with the present messed-up situation than the roll of wrong guessers and blundering operatives in John F. Kennedy's Bay of Pigs fiasco in 1961.

Comparatively innocent high officials had to take the rap



CIA Chief Raborn
Too new to be blamed?

under Kennedy in 1961, such as the then CIA head Allen Dulles, his deputy Richard M. Bissell Jr., and the then chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Gen. Lyman Lemnitzer. But Kennedy at that time accepted the whole blame himself. To date the White

House has shown no similar inclination.

Instead, Ambassador Bennett is being blamed on various vague counts; that he failed to have the right contacts in the Dominican Republic, that he overemphasized the danger to American lives in urging the President to rush the marines in on April 28.

Raborn of the CIA is accused of making too emotional an appeal to the White House about the Communist threat. This charge, from Administration sources that should know better, makes little sense. Raborn had just been sworn in on April 28 when Johnson ordered the marines in. The main CIA appeal for prompt action came from retiring CIA chief John McCone.

Mann in a Key Spot

But the digs at Raborn are basically aimed at the intelligence operation he heads. The State Department and Pentagon have consistently cast aspersions on the value of CIA "evaluations."

Undersecretary of State Mann is caught in the scapegoat hunt mainly because he has been considered more instrumental than any other adviser in the President's decision to act at once. On

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Ambassador Bennett
Many fingers point at him

Undersecretary Mann
He has the boss' ear

nemispheric affairs his views have consistently carried great weight with LBJ.

The inside Administration intrigue in this scapegoat hunt has odd aspects. Some of those trying to make Ambassador Bennett the whipping boy are really after Mann. The latter is considered responsible for Bennett's being in Santo Domingo in the first place.

There is an almost hysterical effort by those in the possible line of Presidential fire to pass the buck to other agencies and individuals.

Knife Out for McG. Bundy Too

For example, certain high intelligence officials have the knife out for McGeorge Bundy, White House national security adviser. Bundy is blamed for the White House decision to send a special mission on a desperation basis

to Santo Domingo last Saturday. The aim was to end the fighting. This mission sought unsuccessfully to form a coalition government headed by Antonio Guzman, a close friend of exiled President Juan Bosch.

Guzman's left-wing status was such as to have made him suspect, but it is held in intelligence circles here that the Bundy mission refused to accept this Guzman valuation.

On almost every aspect of the present messed-up situation, there have been false notes struck here. What leaks out of the State Department, Pentagon or CIA privately has no relation to the statements issued publicly by the Administration even at the White House level.

Unneutral Neutrality

The White House again insisted formally today that our troops were in strict ya neutral posture in the Dominican Republic. All the evidence from the scene, including motion pictures and comments from our paratroopers and marines themselves, indicates our military are playing footsie with the Junta, while the Bundy mission has been playing footsie with the rebels—at least on certain days of the week.

The buckpassing, the lack of official candor and all the backbiting going on here suggest only one thing. The President has found himself boxed in with a thoroughly loused-up situation on his hands, and he is trying desperately to find a wa yout. What basically went wrong?

There is no argument about that. Johnson was led to believe that once we put our troops ashore the whole mess could be cleared up in a few days with a temporary coalition government operating to stabilize the country. Instead, this is the fourth week of our intervention, and no immediate solution is in sight.

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